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THE ESSENTIAL BALANCE
BETWEEN
INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL EMPHASIS
IN CHRISTIANITY

A Dissertation Submitted by
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In Candidacy for the B.D. Degree

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THE ESSENTIAL BALANCE BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL
EMPHASIS IN CHRISTIANITY.

I.

It is a commonplace of all realistic thinking about the world to-day that this is a time of crisis, of transition, of the unsettlement of old orders and the establishment of new, of stress and strain, of flux and flow on a vast scale. The world is struggling; the world is bewildered; the world is desperate. Nor has there been seen anywhere in the world a clear pattern, authoritatively presented and universally acceptable, of the way that must be followed for the upbuilding of the nations and the restoration of personal peace of mind alike. Time was, in periods of vast change and vast confusion in the past, when the Christian Church could utter counsels with a power that reached both to the hearts of individuals and to the strategies of governments. Then the Church led. But in the world-wide crisis of to-day the Churches, not one now but many and various, do not lead; they follow. It is not perhaps to be expected that men to-day will obey as of yore the one Christian voice of an authority not to be questioned; they love freedom and

self-determination too well. But, on the other hand, "if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?" John Macmurray gives expression to a widely experienced perplexity when he explains how for two years he attempted, time and time again, to write a book comparing Christianity and Communism, only to find that his efforts were in vain and that others were similarly failing. For, says he, "the difficulty of the task lies in our inability to give any satisfactory account of what we mean by Christianity".⁽¹⁾ He believes this inability to be due to the indefiniteness of all the answers rather than their multiplicity. And certainly their multiplicity itself has been great. Any one definition which we may propose to give for Christianity is open to the objection that it has been proposed before and that it has been declared by someone to fail to do justice to some important element in Christianity. But even so, almost innumerable definitions have been propounded.

Why have we this vagueness, this confusing variety in Christian definitions? We would answer that it is because Christianity in its long development has

(1) Macmurray, p. 11.

been like a tree, which as it has grown larger, has put forth a wider spread of limb. And the common fault of the Christian has been to climb out upon some particular limb and, noticing some particular fruit that grows there, insist that the tree is to be defined only in terms of that fruit. But this is a tree with the remarkable property of producing many different fruits, and there have arisen accordingly many different definitions. Now it is perfectly true that the Founder of Christianity said, "By their fruits ye shall know them",⁽¹⁾ but he said it in a context which makes it very clear that this is a maxim for ascertaining what is Christian, but not what Christianity is.

"Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit."⁽²⁾ By the fruits you can know whether the tree that produced it is good or bad. And by the good or bad conduct of the individual you can know whether good and sound religion holds his loyalty, or he is really in the grip of evil forces. But though you recognize the Christian by his good actions, you cannot so define the ultimate principle of his Christianity. As though, because most Christians are careful to worship upon the Sabbath

(1) Matthew vii:20(A.V.) (2) Matthew vii:17(A.V.)

Day, the principle of Christianity could be held to lie in Sabbath observance! Or, because most Christians are generous in their gifts to the poor, the meaning of Christianity might be sought in benevolence alone! Too many Christians, we repeat, have climbed out on a branch of the tree of Christianity to dissect a particular fruit, and then proudly proclaim the principle of the whole tree from that dissection, only to feel "left out on a limb" by the insistence of another that the particular fruit which he has examined tells the truth more accurately.

The more sensible thing would appear to be the recognition that fruits are only fruits and that the life of the tree is determined rather by the nature of the soil, the strength of the root system, the soundness at the heart of the gnarled old trunk. By this we mean to say that Christians need not continue to fumble with the multiplicity and indefiniteness of their definitions of which Macmurray complains. They can achieve certainty as to the essential elements in Christianity, certainty which they must achieve if their religion is to give guidance once again to a world in need, a world that without its leadership may fall into utter ruin. That certainty is to be found

in a three-fold study, first of the nature of the eternal soil out of which Christianity springs, the reality which forever conditions its birth and growth; second of the roots actually sent down by the first Christian seed in the life of Jesus Christ and His teaching, implicit and explicit, roots upon whose work the whole tree must ever depend; and third, of the sound growth of the trunk itself, the trunk that is the Christian Church itself pushing its main growth ever gradually upward through the storm and sunshine of the atmosphere that is human history. It will be our thesis that each part of this three-fold study will lead to the discovery of the same principle at work, the principle which must therefore be held to be basic to all that is or ever will be properly called Christian. That principle is, briefly, the advancement equally of the welfare of the individual and of the whole society of mankind in a balance, which is maintained through the whole-hearted seeking of God for his own sake.

First, then, consider the nature of the soil in which Christianity must attempt its growth, the reality with which it is inescapably surrounded as the framework of its whole existence. That soil is the human consciousness. If Christianity is to make its appeal at all, it must be to human beings, and to them within the limitations laid upon them by their very nature as human. Each human being enjoys a physical life which has a definite growth, maturity, and final decay, controlled by laws of food, rest, shelter, exertion, and so on, which he can only obey. This physical life has many of its controlling features in common with all simpler forms of life found on this earth. But what makes him distinctively human is that upon this physical life there is mysteriously superimposed what we call consciousness. It too has its limitations and its laws, and within these Christianity does its work with mankind if it does it at all. This human consciousness is, we repeat, the soil in which Christianity must take root and grow. It is the form of life we call mental and moral and spiritual. The merely physical life which humanity shares with the beasts would seem to be a sort of subsoil, underlying and supplying nutriment to the soil, but itself unable to

provide the conditions for Christian growth. Yet in the very subsoil of the simpler, lower forms of physical life is found some rudimentary indication of the principle that makes possible the growth of Christianity in the soil above. And in human consciousness itself the indications in the same direction are unmistakable.

The simplest, lowliest form of life upon this planet is known to biology as the "amoeba". This unicellular organism, devoid of all the specialized capacities for seeing, hearing, walking, etc., that seem to us inseparable from life, would seem to be merely alive, and nothing more. But even this simplest of all forms of life displays a balance between self-regarding and other-regarding impulses. It naturally reaches out to seize, and take into itself for food, various elements of its environment, thus asserting itself at the expense of what is around it. At the same time, and equally naturally, it gives of itself by cell-division for the propagation of the species, thus sacrificing itself in the interest of another life outside of itself. Here is the rudimentary beginning, insisted upon by nature, of the balance between self-concern and social concern as a principle of life. The higher the form of life the more clearly this principle emerges.

The bird or animal that is seeking a mate will fight to the death with a rival for its own selfish rights to that mate, but the parent bird or animal will willingly sacrifice its own life if need be in defence of its young. The same is true in the lowest reaches of human life, where consciousness seems hardly yet to have supplanted instinct. Here family life, not necessarily monogamous or monoandrous, is entered into for the gratification of self-centred desire, but maintained for the protection of the weak offspring by the willing self-sacrifice and suffering of the strong parents.

What happens when we reach the stage of the emergence of that higher form of life, human consciousness? Edward Caird has given the world a masterly analysis of the nature and limitations of human consciousness in words which we quote:

"When we consider the general nature of our conscious life - our life as rational beings endowed with the powers of thinking and willing - we find that it is defined, and, so to speak, circumscribed by three ideas, which are closely, and even indissolubly, connected with each other.

"These are the ideas of the object or not-self, the idea of the subject or self, and the idea of the unity which is presupposed in the difference of the self and the not-self, and within which they act and react on each other, in other words, the idea of God..... The object is the general name under which we include the external world and all the things and beings in it, all that we know and all that we act on, the whole environment, which conditions the activity of the ego and furnishes the means and the sphere in which it realizes itself.....There is only one thing which stands over against this complex whole of existence, and refuses to be regarded simply as a part of the system; and that is the ego, the self, the subject for which it exists.....All our life, then, moves between these two terms which are essentially distinct from, and even opposed to, each other. Yet.....they are also essentially related, nor could either of them be conceived to exist without the other.....We know the object only as we bring it back to the unity of the self; we know the subject only as we realize it in the object.

"But lastly, these two ideas....point back to a third which embraces them both, and which in turn constitutes their limit and ultimate condition...Recognizing

that the object only exists in distinction from, and related to, the subject, we find it impossible to reduce the subject to a mere object among other objects. Recognizing that the subject exists only as it returns upon itself or realizes itself in the object to a mere phase in the life of the subject. But, recognizing them as indivisible yet necessarily related, we are forced to seek the secret of their being in a higher principle, of whose unity they in their action and reaction are the manifestation, which they presuppose as their beginning and to which they point as their end....To put it more directly, the idea of an absolute unity, which transcends all the oppositions of finitude, and especially the last opposition which includes all others - the opposition of subject and object - is the ultimate presupposition of our consciousness. Hence we cannot understand the real character of our rational life or appreciate the full compass of its movement, unless we recognize as its necessary constituents or guiding ideas, not only the ideas of object and subject, but also the idea of God."⁽¹⁾

(1) Caird. p. 64 ff.



To sum up Caird's argument, with which we heartily agree: By our very constitution as human beings we are compelled to give attention both to ourselves and to the surrounding world of things and people, all the while realizing, however dimly, that there is a higher controlling power behind their mutual opposition, yet mutual relationship. Nothing is said as to the exact degree of attention that must be given, normally, to each element in this situation that confronts our consciousness, yet the implication is plain that thought and action will move in a nicely balanced way between the self and the not-self because of the recognition that such a balance is ordained by the higher power. Thus our thesis has emerged in the very soil of the human nature with which Christianity has to deal.

It may be objected that there is nothing specifically Christian in all this as yet. There cannot be, of course, the full flowering of Christianity in the primeval soil of human nature before ever the seed is planted. But there is at the very dawn of consciousness a clue to the appeal that the world's greatest religion must make when it comes in fulness if it would plumb the depths of human possibilities. This is found in the idea of God as supplying the basis for the

relationship yet distinction of the ideas of self and not-self. Here is no mere moral preachment. One is to give attention to others around him not because of qualities inherent in them but because they and he himself are alike in some connection with God. The bond of unity between him and his fellow human beings is never to be found in any merely human connection such as common racial origin but is always to be traced back to God Himself. Here in the very possibilities of human consciousness is thus found the groundwork for the glorious religion of the brotherhood of all mankind beneath the Fatherhood of God that found its fruition in Jesus Christ. Furthermore, there is here to be seen a sufficient motivation for sustained moral endeavor when the stage is reached where the consciousness not only apprehends the ideas of self, not-self and God, but acts upon them. For if, as Caird insists, the self and not-self "in their action and reaction are the manifestation" of a higher principle "which they presuppose as their beginning and to which they point as their end", then the initiative in matters moral must lie with that higher principle. As A.E. Taylor finely puts it: "If God is not only the goal, but the author and sustainer of moral effort, the whole moral endeavour of man must

be a response to what we can only call a movement from the other side. It is, indeed, our own because it is the response of such moral personality as we already possess, but none the less it is a response to a divine initiative. In that language of human social relations on which we have to fall back whenever we try to speak of these matters, we love God because God first loved us."⁽¹⁾ And, as we might add, we love ourselves and each other because God first loved us all.

III.

But Christianity, while expressing itself in accordance with the nature of human consciousness in general, is nevertheless a specific growth, a movement which had a definite beginning at a particular time and place. In the life of one Jesus, called Christ, of the village of Nazareth in out-of-the-way Galilee at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, in the days when Caesar Augustus ruled all the world from Rome, a seed was sown in the soil of human possibilities. And that seed took firm root and became first a slender but

(1) Taylor, p. 239.

strong sapling able to outlast any storm, and finally the massive, towering tree which we know as Christianity to-day. The growth of the tree has very largely depended, and still depends, upon the kind of seed that was sown and the manner in which it developed a root-system wide-spread and vigorous enough to send nourishment from the soil of reality to the whole of the mighty tree. To understand the principle of the tree's growth we must know something of the seed and the root-system.

Jesus was born into the politico-religious order called Judaism, wherein the worthy life was held to consist in the strict fulfilment of a system of law, very detailed in its application to daily life. He spoke of himself as introducing the Kingdom of God (or Kingdom of Heaven), and devoted his teaching and his comment upon his action to the exposition of what that Kingdom involved. R.J. Barker gives a fine summary of the content of Jesus' teaching in these words: "First of all He declares He has not come to destroy, but to fulfil: 'not an iota, not a comma, will pass from the law until it is all in force. Therefore whoever relaxes a single one of these commands, were it even one of the least, and teaches men so, he will be ranked least in

the Kingdom of heaven; but whoever obeys them and teaches them, he will be ranked great in the Kingdom of heaven.'⁽¹⁾ The fulfilment of the law did not mean the fulfilment of everything the Jew of his time accepted as 'the law'. That is obvious not only in His treatment of the five principles which He selects from the old law, illustrating how the righteousness He proclaimed had a wider and deeper significance than that of the Scribes and Pharisees.⁽²⁾ He also declared that two laws were paramount: 'The chief one is "You must love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, with your whole mind, and with your whole strength." The second is this: "You must love your neighbor as yourself."' And when an enthusiastic Scribe said with approval, 'that is far more than all the holocausts and sacrifices', Jesus said to him: 'You are not far from the Kingdom of God'.⁽³⁾ Earlier a lawyer asked him: 'Teacher, what am I to do to inherit life eternal?' Jesus replied with the question: 'What is written in the law? What do you find

(1) Matt.V:18-20(Moffatt)

(2) Matt.V:20-48

(3) Mark xii:29-33

there?' The lawyer answered by quoting the two commands of love. And Jesus said to him: 'A right answer. Do that and you will live.'⁽¹⁾ Always these commands determined His attitude to ancient laws and customs. If these organized observances did not meet the material and spiritual needs of men He brushed them on one side, and He evidently regarded that kind of action as the evidence by which a man proved that he had 'eternal life'. Once again we have the insistence - 'By their fruits you shall know them.'⁽²⁾ Love to God and love to our neighbor are integral parts of the one saving experience, and the reality of this new life of loving relationship with men and with God is seen in the revolution it makes in the life of men together, and this is not a by-product, it is a fruit. It draws its vitality and its character from the tree that bears it.....

"That the 'social side' of Christianity is the character of its new individual life, and no by-product, is seen in such passages as 'By this every one will recognize that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another,'⁽³⁾ and 'I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.'⁽⁴⁾ It has its characteristic

(1) Luke x:25-28(Moffatt). (4) Matt.v:44,45(Moffatt)

(2) Matt.vii:20

(3) John xiii:35(Moffatt)

expression and becomes real in the meeting of the needs of men. Those who do so are the 'blessed' and they inherit 'the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' (1)"(2)

In the teachings of Jesus our thesis is therefore explicitly insisted upon. If we are to be followers of His, we must practise a balanced love of those around us and of ourselves within the framework of a whole-souled love for God. The entirely necessary connection between these elements in our religion is well portrayed by Barker. At the same time, he does not perhaps sufficiently stress the key significance of our love for God as alone enabling us to love our neighbor as we ought. It is never difficult for a man to love himself, though he may frequently fail to advance his own good through ignorance of it. But it is often tremendously difficult for him to love his neighbor, for he in turn may be ungrateful, mean, or positively hateful and harmful in his attitude. Furthermore, the love of neighbors is apt to become stereotyped within the limits of ordinary unavoidable connection as in the family or the business. And Jesus is pro-

(1) Matt. xxv:34(A.V.)

(2) Barker pp.92 ff.

pounding a principle which must apply to any and every neighbor. On this point, the Parable of the Good Samaritan leaves no doubt.⁽¹⁾ It was to break the grip of inadequate habits in this region and give access to the only enabling power that Jesus delivered some startling utterances. "If anyone comes to me", he said, "and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children, aye and his own life, he cannot be a disciple of mine; whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me, he cannot be a disciple of mine."⁽²⁾ And "whoever wants to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."⁽³⁾ Such utterances appear superficially the negation of both love of neighbor and love of self, a direct contradiction of his own insistence upon these loves. But what they are is a rejection of these loves on their usual low, habit-ridden, self-centred plane in order that whole-hearted devotion may first be registered in love of God. God cannot be truly loved unless he becomes the focus of the whole attention and desire. We love God when we let no lesser loyalty keep us from offering our all to Him and from doing His bidding as we become aware of it. The Cross, as it presented itself steadily, insistently to Jesus Himself

(1)Luke x:30-42 (2)Luke xiv:26,27(Moff) (3)Matt.xvi:25(Moff)

for many months before the actual event, was the call to love God to the extent of performing His bidding to the uttermost. So he "stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem"⁽¹⁾, and so he began to "shew unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things."⁽²⁾, and so he scornfully rejected Peter's objections as being human counsels of prudence rather than expressions of the mind of God.⁽³⁾ And in the hour of the final testing of his self-discipline, in the Garden of Gethsemane, he prayed: "nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."⁽⁴⁾ The cross which he said his followers must carry was a similar, daily renewed, consecration unto God, wherein their lives would be virtually lost in complete willingness to do the will of God.

When once this condition has been met, and we do truly love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, then we become able to love all our neighbors because God loves them, and to do good to them because God does so. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven:

(1) Luke ix:51(A.V.)
(2) Matt.xvi:21(A.V.)

(4) Matt.xxvi:39(A.V.)
(3) Ibid:23(



for he maketh his ~~sun~~^{sun} to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust...
...Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."⁽¹⁾ In accordance with the laws of consciousness, the higher principle is needed to explain and energize the relationships between the self and others. The love of God is a presupposition of the love of neighbor balanced with the love of oneself. The "initiative of the eternal" supplies the moral motivation. Jesus Christ in His life and on His cross is the great revealer of the "initiative of the eternal", of the love of God for all men, which love supports and encourages, indeed makes possible, both our love for Him and our love for each other. Indeed, ultimately, it supplies the ground for our own proper self-love. We must at times "hate our own life" in order to learn to love God, but when we have so learned there will be place for self-love in the light of God's love of us. We are not insignificant. We are the objects of a glorious providence. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."⁽²⁾

(1) Matt.v:44,45,48(A.V.) (2) Matt.x:29-31(A.V.)

IV.

Jesus' life and teaching was the seed of Christianity planted firm in the soil of human possibilities. And the germinative principle of that seed was the same principle which as we have shown, governs the very life of the human consciousness; namely, a balanced love of self and of others energized by a whole-hearted love of God.

The Christian movement was the seed taking root and growing and daring to shoot up into the atmosphere of human history. Not always was its growth sure and steady. Sometimes there were wintry storms that threatened to freeze the sap in the trunk and kill the whole young tree; sometimes there were parching winds that seemed determined to scorch and wither leaf and branch; sometimes worms ate their way perilously near to the heart of the tree. Not always was the growth as it should be. The friendly warmth of the sun from time to time encouraged the excessive growth of branches on the sunny side of the tree to warp and bend the main trunk by their weight. Sometimes the prevailing wind would blow relentlessly until it caused the whole tree to yield in the direction of its pressure. But through every difficulty the tree went on, losing here but gaining there, changing the trim beauty of youth

for the scarred but triumphant dignity of age, pressing ever upward into the blue and pushing its roots ever deeper after every storm into the soil of reality. From the nature of its growth we can learn more of the secret of its growth, more that will help us know what pruning and what encouraging care it needs to-day. Let us try.

The social as well as individual nature of salvation is made very plain in the New Testament description of the first great ingathering of new followers of Christ: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers....And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved."⁽¹⁾ R.J. Barker quotes two significant comments on this passage. The Greek word here translated fellowship is *κοινωνία* (koinonia). Says Dr. Anderson Scott: "The emergence of consciousness described as Koinonia

(1) Acts ii:42-47 (A.V.)

points to the fact that the primary function of the Spirit was the removal of 'diffinities', and the bringing into existence of a sacred Fellowship in which 'there was neither male nor female, bond nor free'. And this Fellowship became in turn the organ of the Spirit, and so an extension of the Incarnation, to which it was only natural, ere many years had passed, to give the description 'Body of Christ'....The word (koinonia) in this specific sense would appear to denote a fellowship which was not merely a fellowship of believers inter se, nor yet a fellowship of the believers individually with the Spirit, but a complex experience which included both. It was in relationship with one another that men continuously realized their relation to Christ and to God through Him....It was a new name for a new thing, community of spirit issuing in community of life."⁽¹⁾ The second comment is from Dr. Bicknell, as follows: "Everywhere there is a great sense of togetherness. The common meal, whatever else it signified, at least expressed the idea of brotherhood. The sharing of all possessions was no communism imposed by law. It was the unpremeditated impulse of those who were so filled with the Spirit of fellowship that they literally loved one another as truly as themselves.

(1) Quoted in Barker, p. 122.

It is a libel on their enthusiasm to suppose that it originated from any calculation that the end of the present age was at hand, or from any economic scheme."⁽¹⁾

The conclusion which Barker draws seems to us justified: "If the Spirit, whose primary function is the removal of 'diffinities', is related to the Fellowship as the Spirit of Jesus was to his body, it is easy to see the essential social character of the new life emerging at Pentecost. This is no by-product of religion, it is the crucial element of Christianity, being the condition of that fuller and deeper knowledge of God which is described as "the Spirit within" and at the same time the positive creation of the indwelling Spirit.

"There is no escape from the certainty that in the New Testament the doctrine of the Spirit is the doctrine of the Divine Community, that the having "all things in common" is at once the direct result of Christ's coming to the hearts of men and the necessary condition of His full indwelling."⁽²⁾

All through the book of the Acts of the Apostles are indications that this conclusion is in accordance with the facts.

(1) Quoted in Barker, p. 123.

(2) Barker, pp. 122, 123.

The epistle of James comes from an early period in the life of the Christian community in Jerusalem. Its author's understanding of the nature of the gospel is essentially the same. He sternly rebukes the tendency to be more considerate to the rich man who enters the fellowship than to the poor man, declaring: "If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."⁽¹⁾ He urges: "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: But the rich, in that he is made low."⁽²⁾ He further says: "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead."⁽³⁾

It should be remembered that the writer of this epistle was almost certainly the brother of Jesus, the recognized head of the Christian group in Jerusalem. And this Jerusalem group contained the eye-witnesses of Jesus' life, the largest number of those still living who had shared the earthly days of Christ's ministry, who were witnesses of His resurrection, and who had shared the days of waiting till His Spirit filled

(1) James ii:9(A.V.) (2) James i:9,10(A.V.) (3) James ii:15-17

their hearts. We need not concern ourselves with the adequacy of the forms in which this first community expressed its repudiation of material wealth save only as a means of fellowship. For after all, our purpose is not to try to prove that they ~~de~~liberately planned and then applied some specific economic scheme. It is to see whether or not they felt any necessary inter-connection between concern for others and concern each for himself in the light of their vision of the love of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The evidence is very complete that they did feel this necessary inter-connection and did act upon it. "To dismiss their way of life as the aberration of excitement, or as due to an early expectation of the end of the world, or as an impracticable experiment, is to pass reflections not only on the character of that community but on the mental and spiritual quality of those men who had been chosen to be with Jesus; nay more, it is to belittle the Master's mind, whose thoughts and Spirit they shared."⁽¹⁾

The remainder of the New Testament gives us pictures of this same consciousness at work throughout early Christian history. Paul, on his missionary journeys, establishing local groups of Christians in many different places, never let them forget that they were part of a

(1) Barker, p. 128.

great brotherhood. When famine and persecution distressed the Christians in Jerusalem, he encouraged all these groups to make generous gifts. He never regarded this giving as a "sacrifice"; indeed, it was an obligation and a means of spiritual enrichment to the giver.

As he put it in his second letter to the Corinthians:

"The service rendered by this fund does more than supply the wants of the saints, it overflows with many a cry of thanks to God. This service shows what you are, it makes men praise God for the way you have come under the gospel of Christ which you confess, and for the generosity of your contributions to themselves and to all; they are drawn to you and pray for you, on account of the surpassing grace which God has shown to you. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!"⁽¹⁾

And again, writing to the Roman community, he says:

"Macedonia and Achaia have decided to make a contribution (koinonia) for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem.

Such was their decision; and yet this is a debt they owe to these people, for if the Gentiles have shared (verb form of koinonia) their spiritual blessings, they owe them a debt of aid in material blessings".⁽²⁾ Here the spiritual is closely bound up with the material, the sharing in material possessions with the sharing in

(1) 2 Cor.ix:12-15(Moff.) (2) Rom.xv:26,27(Moff.)

spiritual possessions. This was a tremendously important feature in the early growth of Christianity.

As Professor C.H. Dodd points out in his book, "The Meaning of Paul for To-day": "For all the elaborate organization of the Empire with its local and central government, there was no real community wherein a man could find that wholehearted fellowship with others in the common concerns which is necessary to a full life....The result in the Roman Empire was the formation of religious and semi-religious guilds, of which the central government was perpetually jealous, which it tried, time and time again, to cripple but never dared utterly destroy. The Christian Church was the biggest attempt to create a real community within the amorphous society of the Roman world. To a large extent it succeeded, because it based itself upon a real experience of fellowship founded upon a free and personal relation of a 'Lord' whose character was definite and known - a personal relation which was one of 'faith' or complete confidence." (1)

And so, while the power of the Roman Empire weakened because of its lack of real community, the power of Christianity grew because of its true community that was its very nature. It was inevitable that the

(1) Quoted in Barker, pp. 130,131.

latter should finally grow stronger than the former. Had the process been allowed to follow its normal course, the result might have been the permeation of the whole Roman world with the spirit of Christ both individually and socially expressed. As it was, every forward surge of Christianity was bitterly opposed and terrible persecution was visited time and time again upon each section of the growing Christian community. This forced the movement to a largely underground existence. The result is well expressed by G.G. Atkins: "Christianity was, in its first great formative period, compelled, too largely, to become the opponent of organized social life and government. Its interests, even its existence, lay apart from the going concern of humanity. It could not bring its essentially great force for social reformation to bear upon a situation it might have gone far toward saving. Or, if that were impossible, as Dill and Boissier believe, it might have had a training in endeavoring to save society which would have released Christian forces only now beginning to come into action - and moving stiffly from long disuse. If the first three Christian centuries could have made possible a more sympathetically intimate and creative alliance of religion and civilization, it

would be impossible to calculate the result. But that was impossible; by the time Christianity was in a position to take classic civilization in hand, classic civilization was on its deathbed."⁽¹⁾

Even so, and in spite of the fact that most Christians were not possessed of the rights of citizens, early Christianity exercised considerable indirect influence for social reform. It had to be indirect, and not too obvious to the pagan general public, because a direct attack upon entrenched social evils would have aroused resentment and retaliatory persecution, and the Christians had to endure enough persecution as it was. But their loyalty to what they felt to be implicit in the gospel made the Christians exert a certain indirect but real pressure for the alleviation of great social wrongs. K.S. Latourette writes interestingly of the effect of early Christianity upon slavery, for instance:

"Slavery was a characteristic feature of the social and economic organization of the ancient world... Yet manumission was frequent and the freedman constituted a prominent feature of society.... The Christians conducted no organized campaign against slavery. No effort was made to abolish it, even among themselves. The Christian conscience of the time did not

(1) Atkins, p. 114.

condemn the institution. Christian thinkers held it to be due to the Fall, to be a rod of discipline in the hands of God, and one of the laws of the state appointed by God. However the Christian attitude could not but tend to rid slavery of some of its most extreme features. Paul declared that 'in Christ Jesus' no distinction existed between bond and free,⁽¹⁾ and in a brief but famous letter charged a Christian master to receive as a brother a runaway servant of his who had become a Christian.⁽²⁾ On the other hand, it is also significant that Paul did not charge the master to free the slave, but sent the latter back to his old service. He was no emancipating revolutionist.⁽³⁾ Christianity helped to lighten the opprobrium from which labour suffered. It emphasized the duty of work. Since labour had been associated with slavery, the latter was thereby relieved from some of the obloquy which attached to it. Leading exponents of Christianity also declared that both bond and free were capable of the same moral and spiritual life. Several maintained that men in their original nature were free and equal. Ambrose said that the slave might be superior to his master in character and

(1) Gal.iii : 28(2).

(2) Philemon: 15, 16.

(3) Philemon: passim.

be really more free than he. Augustine held that God did not create rational man to lord it over his rational fellows. How far these ideas as found in the minds of these Fathers had their source in Stoicism and how far in the Gospels, we do not know. It is clear, however, that they were believed to be in accord with the Christian message. Moreover, many Christians freed their slaves. Manumission was often performed in a church and on the great festival days, especially Easter, but it was looked upon not as a duty, but as an act of piety or as a means of expiating past sins. Sometimes the freedom of slaves was purchased by church funds. We even hear of Christians who surrendered their own freedom to ransom others. Slaves were granted religious equality and were permitted to hold office in the church, even that of a Bishop. The matrimonial ties of slaves were protected. Non-Christians were urged to liberate their slaves or to allow them to purchase their freedom, because by such servitude under non-Christians, the religious welfare of the slave was supposed to be imperilled. All of these actions and attitudes, while not regarded as deliberate steps towards terminating the institution of slavery, tended in that direction."⁽¹⁾

(1) Latourette, p. 261-3.

In spite of these fine things, however, the three centuries of steady conflict with paganism tended to harden the Christian mind in general. Something of the gentleness of the gospels, the long-suffering patience of the beatitudes was lost in the long struggle with opposition and persecution, and Christianity began to develop a militant spirit, a hardened temper, an impatient intolerance. When at last the persecutions ceased and the Emperor proclaimed Christianity the state religion, the Church grew proud with its sense of possessing the Empire and promptly began to wield its new power in stern imperial manner. And when, so shortly afterward, the Empire collapsed before barbaric invasion, Christianity soon found its whole attention taken up with administrative and executive duties involved in restoring order, and taming the new wild men to her ways. It is hard, perhaps, to see how things could have been very different, but certainly by the time that the Church had organized itself into a vast imperial system, it had lost important elements of the mind of Christ. Such masses of men untrained in Christian ways were now under its care that it felt it could not give close attention to the spiritual needs of individuals. It must rather herd them into the

discipline of organized thought and organized forms of worship and service which would provide the groundwork for Christian living.

Accordingly the next period of Christian history saw the careful formulation of creeds and the standardization and elaboration of all Church procedures. Once the creeds were formulated all who would be Christians were asked to learn them, assent to them, and repeat them frequently as the expression of their faith. Unable under persecution to show a thorough-going practical concern for the social aspects of the Kingdom of God, Christianity was now so intent upon the practical social pattern which it desired to establish that it was failing the individual. All the precious meanings and promises of the Christian faith were held out to the individual who would recite the doctrines formulated for him and admit that they stated his faith. And he who felt that he saw something in the personality of Jesus or in the nature of his demands of him that was to be differently conceived was turned away as no Christian at all. The doctrines of the Church no doubt carried the central truths of Christianity and kept alive the spirit of Christianity in the face of the new paganism that political chaos brought. But the use made of them throughout the Dark Ages and Middle Ages was too rigid.

There is an element of spontaneity and limitless mutual trust in all true fellowship or community. That is implied in the very simplicity of the command: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself". But spontaneity was discouraged and limits of trust were sharply fixed by the Church's standardization of the pattern of Christian belief and action. The individual came gradually to be considered almost wholly in terms of the institution; ^{and the institution,} growing steadily in power, wealth, and pride of position, became exalted as the fellowship ordained of Christ Himself. For a thousand years the Church dominated civilization, and it is often a question how much it truly loved God and how much it loved only its own power and authority.

The reaction toward the individual and his needs was not long in setting in, but it took centuries to gain strength sufficient to influence the whole movement. And by that time it could do so only through a violent upheaval. The beginnings of the reaction are seen in the withdrawal of some into a life of holy seclusion, in the self-separation from worldly things of monks and nuns. In this connection, Atkins remarks: "It is almost as if the love of freedom, having no social way to assert itself, went off into a kind of excessive

individualism, which had no use for society at all."⁽¹⁾ Nothing much of a constructive and continuing character came of all this hermit-Christianity in the Eastern or Greek Church area. The motive was a good one - withdrawal from the stained worldliness, luxury, moral lawlessness of the East. But the method used succeeded in doing nothing more than losing in the desert sands much that was essentially precious, for it almost totally overlooked the necessity of "community" and made each man or woman who withdrew a hermit. Thus in escaping the weakness of the extreme to which popular Christianity had gone, it fell into the weakness of the opposite extreme. The similar movement in the West, however, wisely avoided this extreme by accomplishing early some social organization of itself into monasteries wherein socially creative things were done. "The monks of the early Middle Ages were pioneers, farmers and craftsmen...The monasteries were centres of peace through centuries of fighting; they preserved for us what writings of the classic world we now possess....They were hospitals, charitable foundations, homes for the aged, and a safe shelter for a traveller in a lawless time....They were, first and last, the most successful experiments in communism so far recorded, because they

(1) Atkins, p. 180

supplied a motivation strong enough to hold men to the communal life."⁽¹⁾ We know, of course, what that motivation was - a balanced concern for individual and social good energized by whole-hearted love for God.

A further evidence of reaction against the excessive formalism and institutionalism of the mediaeval Church is found in the growth of mysticism. Mysticism is the assertion of the value of inner experience in religion. Any assurance of God and the reality of religion through an inner joy and peace is mystical. By this test the elements of mysticism are to be seen in Christianity from the start. But when the almost universal tendency was to ignore them in excessive attention to externals, things mystical came to receive the greater stress in some lives as though to provide the Christianity with a needful self-corrective.

The struggles and changing conditions economically of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries in western Europe brought it about that poor people, who suffered most under the circumstances, "without very much organization or leadership.....formed themselves into sisterhoods and brotherhoods to practise the primitive Christian virtues. They adopted a half communal type

(1) Atkins p. 182,3.

of life. It was easy for them to share what they had among themselves because they had so little. They provided hospitals for the sick and the aged; took care of the sick or the insane; they carried the dead to their graves, and healed as best they could the wounds and sicknesses of a sorely wounded time.....

..."The brethren of the "Free Spirit" reacted strongly against the whole sacramental system and anticipated the Anabaptists of the Sixteenth Century....They believed themselves to be guided by an inward voice, which was surer than the truths preached in the Church."(1)

This development took place mostly in Flanders. Meantime German mysticism was being given its initial impetus by Meister Eckhart (1260-1327). He was high in the Dominican order, but St. Dominic would have found his teaching strange reading. He found a way to peace, in which God is all in all and the world nothing at all. Time and space disappeared in his teaching; and the soul and God were found to be but two shingings of the same light. Such are the rarefied regions of thought into which pure individual contemplation of God carries the one who ignores the social scene. It is the lack of balance being displayed again. But it had its provocation

(1) Atkins, p. 227.

in the absorption of the Church in the social scene alone.

Such teachings as these, with other influences, created the Friends of God. "The Friends of God were and desired to remain faithful members of the Catholic Church; but they put before tradition the direct experiences of the Spirit. They believed there was a 'divine spark' in every soul which, kindled into flame, would make 'divine and supernatural' men and an 'upper school of perfect resignation in which selfhood was slain and the Holy Spirit became teacher and guide.'"(1)

The whole mediaeval development of mysticism can rightly be called, with Atkins, "not a movement with clear marked retaining walls, but a ferment and a leaven".(2) He refers to the difficulty which a qualified scholar has "to place and identify a single figure in the dissolving moving picture of a religious phase which colours the spiritual history of Europe for three hundred years."(3) Some followers of the mystic way practised a very sensible brotherhood life. But others "surrendered themselves to an excess of self-examination, grew spiritually morbid, and sought the peace of their souls through the crucifixion of their bodies. Henry Suso is a classic example."(4)

(1) Atkins, p. 228, quoting in part Evelyn Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church*, pp.137-138.

(2) Atkins, p. 228.

(3) Atkins, p. 229.

(4) Atkins, p. 231.

In spite of the rebuke administered by monasticism and mysticism, the Church in general continued on its formalistic way, seeking to regularize individual conduct within the conduct patterns of the institution. The tragedy was that even that amount of genuine social concern with which she began became overshadowed by her concern for her own machinery until she could no longer prevent the major crisis known as the Reformation.

Of course more than one factor combined over a long period of years to produce, ultimately, the Reformation. And it would be wrong to say that negligence on the part of the Church was responsible for it all. Nevertheless, the issue might have been very different had the Church been more truly sensitive to social needs. For instance, the impact of nationalism upon the dissolving unity of the mediaeval order was certainly a contributing factor in producing the Reformation. Atkins comments significantly: "Between the end of the Empire and the rise of modern nationalism there was nothing for a man to belong to save the Church or his feudal overlord. All the forces which combined to make a nation naturally created the national mind, and that changed everything.....

"If the Church had possessed a more far-sighted

understanding of what the rise of nationalism really meant, and been more sensitively hospitable to the demands of the national spirit, the religious history of the last four hundred years might need to be entirely rewritten. Or if, on the other hand, Christianity had really possessed force enough to create among competitive nations a real sense of unity in destiny, operation, and faith, the history of the last four hundred years might be rewritten with the omission of many bloody chapters.

"Western civilization has been caught and ground for four hundred years between the upper and nether millstones of these two failures." (1)

From the point of view of our thesis we might express it thus:

The Church had failed for centuries to present the gospel in its properly balanced form. Its policy had been to subordinate the individual and his needs to the Great Institution, the Church. And for the very reason that the Church had, for a long time, managed to be in itself the almost all-inclusive social framework, it had come to equate even the social side of the gospel with the advancement of the interests of the Church. And so the Church's gaze had become centred upon itself. It was thus unable to see the growing sense of individual

(1) Atkins, pp. 247-8

worth and destiny that pulsed through the new nationalism that was arising. It was not, therefore, "sensitively hospitable to the demands of the national spirit", as it should have been. And at the same time it could not realize that there was demanded in the gospel a larger social good than could be forever comprehended within the framework of any organization. It continued to seek to conform the new social outlook of nationalism to its own social pattern, and in failing to look beyond itself it failed "to create among competitive nations a real sense of unity in destiny, operation and faith." The failure on both individual and social sides was the failure to interpret and apply Christianity in accordance with its own inherent genius.

The second great contributing factor to the Reformation, called Humanism, did much to show up this failure for what it really was. Symonds in "The Revival of Learning", defines humanism as a "new and vital perception of the dignity of man as a rational being apart from theological determinations, and...the further perception that classic literature alone displayed human nature in the plenitude of intellectual and moral freedom."⁽¹⁾ For a thousand years this world had been in the thought of the devout only the threshold of heaven,

(1) Quoted in Atkins, p. 251.

hell, or purgatory. Natural reactions against the grossness of paganism had carried the Christian mind away from the world of time and the senses, leaving countless lovely and human things behind in the change. The human body, for instance, had come to be regarded as either a garment to be impatiently worn till one might put it off, or else, through its appetites, an enemy of the soul. Humanism was the return of the human spirit upon the interests, freedoms, beauties, meanings of the world. Since classic art and literature were the materials upon which it first seized, seeming to possess a magic power to release them, it began in those lands in which classic art and literature had flourished, then spread gradually to other countries.

Of course, a sheer paganism came back with the pagan poets, and the pagan marbles and bronzes found in Roman gardens were set up in the light again. There was nothing in the movement so far to release new religious forces. But the new knowledge of the Greek language led more serious scholars to the critical study of the New Testament, and this had profound effects. These scholars "began to check off the glosses of the theologian and the claims of the churchman by the actual words and the plain actual meanings of the Gospels

and Epistles," (1) and what they found in these documents did not seem to fit in with what they actually saw around them in the manners and morals of the Church. A new standard was thus discovered by which to judge the achievements and failures of organized Christianity, a standard that possessed the authority that ever rests with original meanings over later modifications and accomodations.

Once this new authority was set up and its force accepted, something was started which again might have done a steady, quiet work for human good had the Church understood. But it could not understand a challenge to its age-old authority; it resisted; and a struggle began which was fanned by nationalism and other factors into the major conflict of the Reformation and the counter-Reformation."The movements of the Reformation and all that went with it filled Europe with fighting and divisions for almost exactly one hundred and twenty-five years and, when the dust of the last battle was laid and trampled lands had begun to grow green again, everything had changed and modern Europe had been born in so tremendous a travail."(2)

What was the effect of it all upon the growth of the Christian tree? Christianity since the Reformation

(1) Atkins, p. 253.

(2) Atkins, p. 265.

has been richer in content, more many-sided in expression than before. The unity of the old Church was being maintained at the cost of variety and vitality. Variety there has been since in great measure, and Christianity is probably richer for High Mass in St. Peter's and Quaker meetings and the many varieties of Christian expression that lie between. Vitality, too, was restored to Christianity through the searching ordeal of the long conflict. The graver pre-Reformation abuses have never re-appeared. A sense of the saving nearness of God has come to multitudes of the devout under Reformed leadership. The Catholic Church itself, which has surrendered no position held by it to be essential, has profited by the freedom and challenge of Protestantism. The annals of conscientious devotion to the gleam the soul follows have been enriched by a lengthening record of sacrificial constancy. The ethical standards of Christianity generally have been raised and purified. All this, we feel, was accomplished because with all its complexity of causes, methods and results, the Reformation did really mean something of a return to the basic principles apparent in Christianity's root system and early growth, namely, concern for the full welfare of both oneself and his neighbor, the individual and the

social order through the balancing, energizing power of a supreme concern for God and the doing of His will.

V.

The great quest of the Protestant mind ever since the beginnings of the Reformation has been for freedom of faith and worship and action. Very great devotion has often been directed to the securing of it, devotion equal to the finest recorded to the credit of the followers of Christ of ancient days when all the world was against them. Lutheranism and Anglicanism sought freedom from the papal system. Calvinism and the freer reform movement in general sought a whole new church organization based upon Biblical antecedents, to be freely established by free individuals drawn by conscience from out the ranks of men. A burning zeal was roused by the search for these freedoms, a zeal with force enough to satisfy the soul through its complete absorption in the object sought. And for long years the way was disputed, and Protestantism, summon- all its energies to the task of achieving freedom, failed to realize what it was at the same time losing.

But it is now generally admitted that Protestantism as a whole has stripped religion too bare. It has so emphasized the right of self-determination in

in matters of religion as to make almost inevitable the splitting up of the Church into many separate fragments and to make those fragments careful only for their own, but indifferent to each other's welfare. Thus was religion stripped almost bare of the sense of fellowship transcending differences which always thrilled the early Christians. Furthermore, the effort to reach the individual with the secret of his freedom has been mostly directed to convincing his intellect, and has made all Protestantism too excessively doctrinal, too aridly intellectual. A man's intellect would appear to be the citadel of his freedom, the general headquarters in which is planned the strategy of his warfare and from which must issue all commands for the defence of his rights. But his behavior is not actually so completely determined by his intellect as might at first appear. Present-day psychologists are demonstrating conclusively that emotions, desires, states of bodily health, and many pressures of environment both physical and human, may play large parts in determining actual conduct, sometimes to the total negation of the commands of the intellect itself. Now it is probably quite unfair to say that the Protestant churches have failed to realize something of this. Those of them which made

few changes at the Reformation, except to change their titular headship from the Pope to a king, have continued the mediaeval Church's wise provision of a many-sided appeal to the people. They have made much use of richly ancient symbolism of worship, of beauties of architecture and furnishings, and have usually possessed enormous influence in matters political and economic that has enabled them to provide variegated social controls for their people. And the freer churches have repeatedly made their great emotional appeals and accomplished their "revivals" wherein coldly intellectual factors had little place. Nevertheless, the necessity, at the time when the great rift first occurred, of challenging the authority of the Church with some still greater authority, brought it about that the Bible was exalted as the source of all true religion. Against the infallible Church was set up the infallible Bible, from which it was believed that there could be deduced a series of doctrines indispensable to salvation. Difficulties arose when there was disagreement as to the doctrines which could legitimately be found in the Bible, and split after split occurred between Protestant groups on this very point, but the method of doctrinal emphasis continued, and still continues.

The greater the division of Protestantism, the

more individualist became its whole appeal, and the less it was able to create a deep and wide and abiding sense of fellowship, of social bond. But the genius of Christianity being what it is, it was only natural that, as at every previous stage in Christian history, a corrective reaction should set in. Of recent years, we have witnessed the workings of two great tendencies in Protestantism, both in the direction of a greater recognition of the hitherto overlooked social factor essential to healthy Christianity. One of these tendencies is toward a greater appreciation of the values of Christian fellowship. The Protestant mind seems to have rediscovered the value of the group, the supplementing, correcting, purifying, encouraging influence of the ideas and attitudes of the Christian group upon the ideas and attitudes of the Christian individual. All sorts of unofficial experiments in Christian fellowship have been undertaken spontaneously, very often across denominational lines. Very many discussion groups have arisen, for instance, for which the personnel has been deliberately chosen to represent various points of view meeting in an atmosphere of candor and goodwill for the discussion of all matters important to the Christian. The Oxford Group Movement is another example of the same

spontaneous tendency. Its raison d'être has been the need for some joyous and natural Christian fellowship that would overleap the barriers of denominational tradition and prejudice. Official experiments in wider Christian fellowship there have been too. Protestant groups long separate have learned the new habit of sending official delegations to conferences between denominations. These have grown from small local beginnings to world-wide assemblages of all non-Roman Churches, such as the Oxford Conference of 1937 dealing with Life and Work, and the Edinburgh Conference of 1937 dealing with Faith and Order. Out of these has grown most recently the plan of a World Council of Churches, which at the time of this writing is rapidly becoming a reality in spite of a World War.

The other tendency which has developed in Protestantism recently has been towards a concern for the application of Christian principles to the reforming of the whole social order. This concern has shown itself more upon this continent than elsewhere in Christendom, and more during the twentieth century than ever before. Its chief apostle has been Walter Rauschenbusch of Rochester Theological Seminary, who gave it a great impetus by his books on the subject and his series of

lectures in various seminaries during the first two decades of this century. He explains the emphasis he champions in these words in one of his books:

"The chief purpose of the Christian Church in the past has been the salvation of individuals. But the most pressing task of the present is not individualistic. Our business is to make over an antiquated and immoral economic system; to get rid of laws, customs, maxims, and philosophies inherited from an evil and despotic past; to create just and brotherly relations between great groups and classes of society; and thus to lay a social foundation on which modern men individually can live and work in a fashion that will not outrage all the better elements in them."⁽¹⁾

"It is unjust to Christianity to call our civilization Christian; it is unjust to our civilization to call it unchristian. It is semi-Christian. Its regeneration is in process, but it has run in streaks and strata, with baffling inconsistencies and hypocrisies, even as with you and me.....

"To say that we want to moralize the social order would be both vague and powerless to most men. To say that we want to christianize it is both concrete and

(1) Rauschenbusch, pp. 41,42.

compelling. Christ's spirit is the force that drives us. His mind is the square and plumb line that must guide us in our building.....

"An unchristian social order can be known by the fact that it makes good men do bad things. It tempts, defeats, drains, and degrades, and leaves men stunted, cowed, and shamed in their manhood. A Christian social order makes bad men do good things. It sets high aims, steadies the vagrant impulses of the weak, trains the powers of the young, and is felt by all as an uplifting force which leaves them with the consciousness of a broader and nobler humanity as their years go on."(1)

A great zeal for social reform in the name of Christ has certainly been aroused by Rauschenbusch and the others who have followed him. In fact, for a time it threatened to turn the North American Christian mind totally away from the gospel of inward individual renewal. But a voice from Europe, the voice of Karl Barth, finally came to be heard by many of this side of the water. It was a stern voice, calling men back to the realization of the sinfulness that pervaded all their unaided human efforts and of their utter dependence upon God. The heeding of that voice has done much to

(1) Rauschenbusch, pp. 123-127.

restore a balance between individual and social emphasis, which thinkers like Niebuhr and Tillick and Vlastos are doing much to continue.

It would appear, in conclusion, that this balance must continue to be observed if Christianity is to save itself costly mistakes and difficult recovery from extremes. The nature of the human consciousness, the plain meaning of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the detailed and total experience of Christian history, all point to this as the fundamental principle of Christianity: an equal love of self and others, a balance of concern for the individual's welfare with concern for the social order, in the light of God's great love for all his creatures made apparent to the one who loves Him with all his heart. Let this principle be lived out in all its implications, and the remaking of our torn and bleeding humanity is assured.

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